

NEWS



LETTER

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EVOLUTION OF THE AMAZONE IN LIFE AND LITERATURE

By Stephanie Grant

With the great resurgence of interest in side-saddle riding in the last decade, either as a beloved hobby or as a serious alternative to riding astride, it is gratifying that there is not only an extensive body of "classic" literature and art tracing the evolution of the Amazone, but an ongoing tradition resulting in some contemporary publications as well. The National Sporting Library is fortunate to offer one of the most extensive collections of side-saddle literature to be found in this country, and has hosted researchers from several of the national side-saddle organizations, both here and abroad.

A quick glance through most of the material from the mid-Nineteenth Century to the present discloses the observation hat, just as there is reputedly "nothing new in equitation," so, too, today's side-saddle enthusiasts are still debating the same major points raised by their great-great grandmothers almost 150 years ago.

Side-saddle history is properly divided into three (and, sometimes, four) periods: the late medieval-early Renaissance period (14th-16th Centuries), when women began to sit sideways on their mounts, often using a type of footrest; the development period, when the lady's saddle went through some drastic changes over several hundred years; and the "modern" era from approximately 1830 on.

Perhaps the best place to begin a detailed study of these developments is Lida Fleitmann Bloodgood's exhaustively researched study, *The Saddle of Queens* (1959). In this excellent reference, she details the reputed introduction into England of the primitive side-saddle by Anne of Bohemia in the 14th Century; the invention of the "second crutch" by Catherine de Medici in the 16th Century; and, of greatest importance to all of us who ride aside today, the advent of the third horn or leaping head, around 1830, attributed to a Frenchman, Jules Charles Pellier. By 1860 the original off-side pommel cradling the lady's right thigh had largely disappeared, and the side-saddle in general assumed the shape we recognize today.

As the lady's saddle changed its outward appearance in this last crucial period which concerns us directly, so, too, did the theories on horsemanship for ladies. It was the age of Baucher in England, and manege riding occupied a large share of equestrian literature. A most interesting early work directed at the fair sex to emerge from this era is *The Lady's Practical Guide to the Science of Horsemanship* by George Reeves (1838). After defining the art of manege riding, he says, "Ladies must, therefore, bear in mind that upon the bridle hand they must principally rely, on the skillful use of which, the security of their seat mostly depends." Reeves was, of course, referring not to any unsteadiness of the side-saddle seat necessitating support at the expense of the horse's mouth, but to the classical method of school riding for ladies, in which all four reins were carried in the left hand, with the right hand reserved for using the whip,

not only to obtain school-movements, but even, he advises, for driving into a proper halt.

Interestingly, this "classical" mode of riding side-saddle with one hand only is noteworthy today, as a few of our upper-level dressage competitors are seeking a rule change to allow this option in the competitive sphere, as well as in exhibition dressage, where it has never disappeared.

Reeves' early work also contains some pertinent advice on saddles, despite the fact that in 1838 the leaping head was by no means universally employed. "In most cases," he observes, "a tree is made entirely to fit the horse, without any reference to the comfort or safety of the rider." Far from sounding outdated, this is a complaint frequently encountered today when trying out some of the older side-saddles to be found. His remedy might well be heeded by anyone purchasing a used side-saddle:

All saddles should be stuffed, either before or behind, to bring the saddle perfectly flat on the animal's back, so as to admit of the rider's sitting perfectly level on the saddle, and not hanging on by the knee...It is seldom that a self-taught amateur trots correctly, as the lady in this case rises too frequently to the left of the saddle...the closer she sits, with comfort to herself, in the rise, the safer she is, and the better her appearance must necessarily be.



Portrait of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, 19th Century Amazone renowned for her exploits in the hunting field, and the haute ecole manege. (From Lida Eleitmann Bloodgood's "The Saddle of Queens").

Incredibly, proper stuffing of a side-saddle and the right way to ride a rising trot are two of the principles most abused by today's side-saddle novices. A third major debate centers around jumping, on which there are still two schools of thought. Reeves exactly describes the most widely known method, in which the lady advances her body forward as the horse rises, and gradually returns to an upright position during the descent. At this time, of course, there was no such thing as the forward seat over fences astride.

By 1854, when *The Lady's Equestrian Manual* appeared, on the other side of the Atlantic, in Philadelphia, the modern side-saddle was prevalent enough for author Willis Hazard to comment, "Accidents, indeed, in the side-saddle, are of extremely rare occurrence." Baucher's influence is still evident, but the lady is now to begin her equestrian education on the snaffle, riding with both hands. The book emphasizes proper bit contact with unusual sensitivity, and also cautions that a lady must pay special attention to correct bending in a side-saddle. Among the more helpful suggestions, such as abandoning "a deep hollowness in the centre of the seat" as unnecessary, and the admonition that "the rise in trotting is to be acquired by practice," there is the novel observation that "when a lady, while her horse is going at a smart trot, can lean over, on the right side, far enough to see the horse's shoe, she may be supposed to have established a correct seat"! More applicable today is the statement, "The fundamental seat is that medium position from which all others proceed." The book is charmingly illustrated, with drawings of ladies performing figures from the school levade to the flying leap, and there is the sage conclusion:

"If the lady be but in her noviciate in the art, we strongly advise her not to place too much reliance on her own expertness, or to attempt too much at first; but rather, to proceed steadily, and be satisfied with a gradual improvement; as it is utterly impossible to acquire perfection in the nicer operations of riding, before the minor difficulties are overcome.

Still considering the "classical," a lovely book appeared in England three years later (1857), under royal patronage, by Mrs. Stirling Clarke. *The Ladies Equestrian Guide; or The Habit & The Horse: A Treatise on Female Equitation*, drew from various sources, including some 17th Century quotes from the Duke of Newcastle to point out "an elegance, moreover, in horsemanship, which looks as if it were natural, though it proceeds from art." Some very beautiful lithographs of the flowing skirts once so prevalent, with the ladies depicted on Herring-type horses caught during picturesque (if unmechanical) moments of the various gaits, greatly enhance the book. (In fact, America's side-saddle association, ISSO, takes its logo from one of the loveliest of these.) Mrs. Clarke

expresses her ideal as one of art: "...to have the animal entirely at command, and, as if both were imbued with one common intelligence, the rider vying in temper with her steed in spirit; to unite courage with gentleness, and to employ energy at no cost of delicacy;—these are the essential attributes of the lady-like and accomplished horsewoman." She balances such lofty ambitions with practicality, however, recognizing, "There can be few more effective implements of torture, both as regards the rider and the horse, than an ill-made, and badly fitting side-saddle." Of special interest is her emphasis on a fact quite often disregarded today—that the near side of the saddle should always be stuffed higher than the off side. Mrs. Clarke further mentions the advisability of a seat covered in doeskin, and notes in passing that the off pommel is sometimes dispensed with. To keep the lady from riding with too much weight in her left stirrup, she suggests the practice of removing this support entirely until the lady had developed an independent seat.

By 1881, when Mrs. Power O'Donoghue's *Ladies On Horseback* appeared in London, the emphasis had irrevocably changed from manege riding to foxhunting and keeping up with—or sometimes actually outriding—the men. It was the era of such renowned horsewomen as the Empress Elizabeth of Austria who, it is true, rode the haute école movements on her own Lipizzaner stallions, but was far better known for her daring exploits in the hunting field. By then, the leaping head was considered indispensable, and the old-fashioned "slipper" and "safety" stirrups were giving way to the modern breakaway fittings. "You should ride on your saddle, not in it," writes Mrs. O'Donoghue, "and you must learn to ride from balance or you will never excel, and this you can only do by the use of the level seat...to procure a saddle such as I describe you must have it made to order, for those of the present day are all made with something of a dip, which is most objectionable."

Despite the author's views to the contrary, the controversy over the merits of the level seat vs. a slight dip continue to be argued, with excellent reasons put forth by the advocates of both, and the solution seeming a matter of personal preference.

Mrs. O'Donoghue's anecdotes on jumping are particularly intriguing. At one point she describes a runaway in the hunting field who carried her over an obstacle later measured at 6½ feet. Apprehensive Amazones may pale even further when encountering her lesson regarding the first jump aside: "Fifty to one you will stick on all right, and, if you come off, why it's many a good man's case, and you must regard it as one of the chances of war."

Not to be outdone, the British Amazones' American cousins soon came out with a manual of their own. Elizabeth Karr's 1884 publication of *The American Horsewoman* was billed as "the first one, exclusively devoted to the instruction of lady riders, that has ever been written by one of their

own countrywomen." (*The Lady's Equestrian Manual*, remember, was penned by a man.) While Mrs. Karr spends a good bit of time praising the hard-riding ladies of England at the expense of her own compatriots, she does point out that, in some aspects at least, they were on equal footing. "Leaping is by no means difficult to learn," she writes, making some good points on the "emergency grip" under the third pommel, and when it degenerates into a "dead weight" type of seat. "Many riding-teachers instruct their pupils to incline the body well forward as the horse rises," she notes, "while others require their pupils to lean well back...A happy medium will prove the best."

Almost 100 years later, both methods are still practiced, depending on size and type of obstacle, although almost all side-saddle riders do get forward to some extent as the horse rises to his fence.

The end of the 19th Century saw two works of special note, since they again contrast manege riding and the more modern cross-country preference. Theodore Mead's most interesting American work, *Horsemanship for Women* (1887), reverts to the teachings of Baucher, going so far as to teach the old master's exercise of "coming to the whip," and makes liberal use of direct flexions and work in hand to make a horse suitable for a lady to ride with one hand. Five years later, another New York publication, C. de Hurst's *How Women Should Ride*, details the modern method: "The hands should be held about two thirds of the way back between the right knee and hip, as low as possible" on the lap, although conceding with disapproval that "many hold the reins in the left hand, allowing the right to hang at the side." Before dismissing Mead's old-fashioned tendencies (and the small group of "classics" today who favor this method), it is interesting to note that the earlier work gives what is perhaps the best description to be found anywhere of the side-saddle seat:

The seat should be in the middle of the saddle, not on the right side of it with the body inclined to the left, which is excessively awkward, not on the left side with an inclination to the right, which is equally awkward, and with the additional disadvantage of being sure to cause saddle galls.

It must be admitted, however, that for the modern Amazone, de Hurst's book is easier to read and more practically applicable, with one of the cardinal rules clearly emphasized: "It is seldom realized that the right leg below the knee should be held as firmly against the horse as the left, but such is the case." Like Mrs. Clarke, de Hurst recommends discarding the stirrup at the trot and canter to prevent "the first impression of a novice...to grasp the horse with her left heel, while the leg is bent back from the knee so that it almost reaches his flank." There is also a section on taking drop fences, wire, and combinations with ditches. If this is the type of country "C. de Hurst" actually hunted, it is no wonder the

By Alexander Mackay-Smith

"Lexington was the greatest Thoroughbred America has ever seen". So said Kent Hollingsworth, editor of *The Blood-Horse*. No one is apt to dispute him. Lexington topped the sire list 14 years in succession—16 in all. Not only was he the greatest race horse of his day, but in 1855, as a five-year-old, he set a world's record on April 2 at the Metairie Course, New Orleans, of 7 minutes 19¼ seconds for four miles, a distance over which the best horses in the world had competed since the end of the 17th century. His final race was at the same course on April 14, 1855 for The Jockey Club Purse, when he beat his great rival Lecompte in two straight heats.

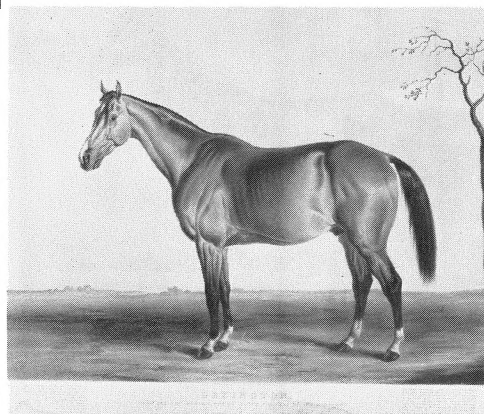
A week later his then owner, Richard Ten Broeck, sent him north to Lexington, Kentucky, to stand at stud at Midway, the farm of W. F. Harper. For what remained of the season he served 16 mares, getting nine of them in foal.

His tremendous reputation as a race horse led publishers to print his portraits in color. In 1852 there arrived in New York from his native Germany Louis Maurer, then 20 years old. He joined the staff of the lithographer Nathaniel Currier, who in the same year took on as a bookkeeper James Merritt Ives, later (1857) to become his partner. In the spring of 1854 Lexington was shipped from New Orleans to Saratoga Springs to get ready for the New York metropolitan racing season, and in early

PORTRAITS OF LEXINGTON

July he arrived at the Union Course, Long Island. Currier promptly sent Maurer out to the race track to sketch the great horse. From this sketch the following year Nathaniel Currier produced a large colored lithograph, the first published portrait of Lexington. Much prized at the time, it has since become extremely scarce. Through generosity of Mrs. Parker Poe, Pebble Hill Plantation, Thomasville, Ga., the National Sporting Library has recently acquired a fine impression of this print in its original frame, which is here reproduced. Also reproduced is Louis Maurer's original drawing. On February 25, 1924 he presented this drawing to that great Troye student and collector, the late Harry Worcester Smith, a drawing which, to the horseman, considerably surpasses the lithograph.

From 1849 to June 1855 the great 19th century equestrian portrait painter Edward Troye (1808-1874) served as professor of Drawing, Painting, and French at the Spring Hill Academy, Mobile, Alabama. During the summer vacations, when the climate at Mobile was particularly hot, Mr. and Mrs. Troye were accustomed to go back to the Lexington area of which she was a native. In the summer of 1854 Troye painted the two Arabaian stallions, Masoud and Mokhladi, which had been brought from Arabia the preceding year by Alexander Keene Richards, of Blue Grass Park, Georgetown, Kentucky. Richards was so delighted with Troye's work

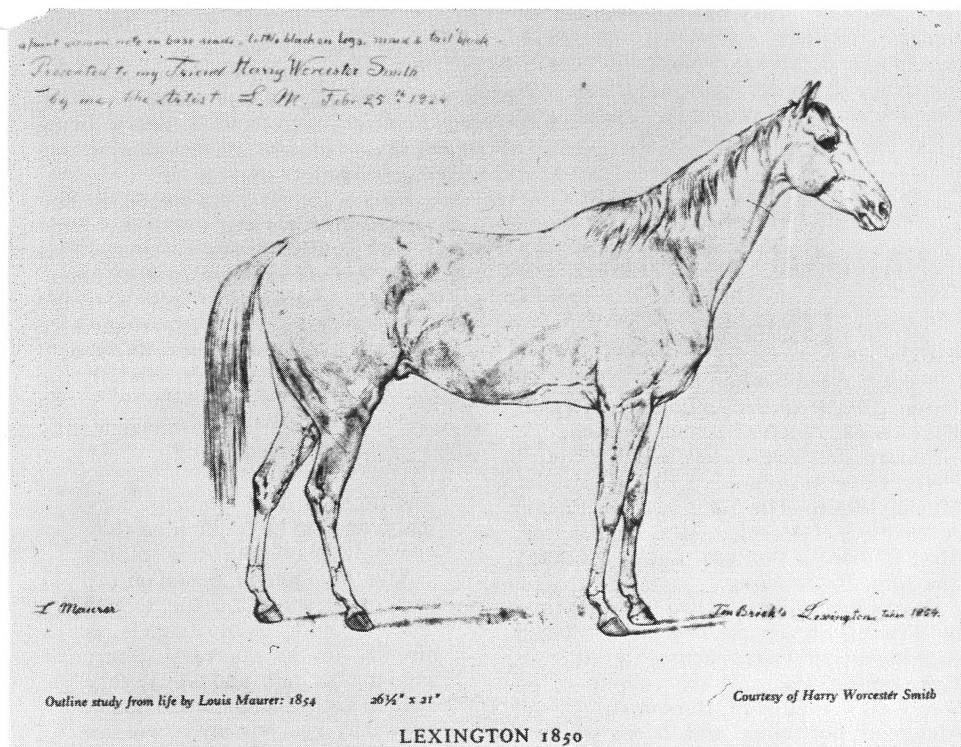


Lexington - a colored lithograph published Dec. 31, 1855 by A. Paprill of London after a portrait by Edward Troye painted in June 1855 at the farm of W.F. Harper, Woodford County, Kentucky, when the horse was still in racing condition. Troye probably took the painting to London in July. The horse's complete racing record is contained in the letterpress. Only 100 copies were printed.

that he persuaded the latter to give up his position at Spring Hill Academy and to accompany him on a second expedition to Arabia, beginning in July 1855. In between the time the Academy closed in Mobile and their departure for London on the first leg of their trip, Troye painted Lexington at the stud farm of W. F. Harper. During the next 15 years he was to paint Lexington a number of times, this being the first.

On December 31, 1855, Lloyd Brothers and Co. of 22 Ludgate Hill, London, published a colored lithograph after Troye's painting. It was engraved by H. Paprill and was dedicated to Lexington's owner Richard Ten Broeck. At the bottom of this portrait and of the one after Louis Maurer complete details of the horse's racing record were set forth. Since the race at the Metairie Course on April 14, 1855 was included, the dating of the Troye picture as June 1855 seems logical, particularly since Troye's presence in Lexington in 1855 was established by his dated portrait of Allworth for Dr. Elisha Warfield, breeder of Lexington.

Troye stopped in England to paint that country's then leading sire, West Australian. It seems highly probable that he also then delivered to Mr. Lloyd, publisher of the lithograph, his portrait of Lexington. Troye proceeded with Keene Richards, and with the latter's cousin, Morris Keene, through France to Constantinople with a side trip to the Crimea. They then sailed to Beirut, and went overland to Damascus where the party spent the winter. The following spring Troye painted a number of landscapes and Biblical scenes, and also helped Richards buy three stallions and two mares. He returned home via Italy, France and Belgium where he visited his sisters and brother and arrived in New York in January, 1857. On February 14, the



A drawing of Lexington as a four-year-old made in July 1854 at the stable of Richard Ten Broeck at the newly refurbished Union Course, Long Island, by Louis Maurer, an employee of Nathaniel Currier, lithographer, of New York City. This drawing served as a model for the Nathaniel Currier colored lithograph of 1855. Louis Maurer lived to be 101. He presented this drawing to Harry Worcester Smith in 1924.

Continued on page 4

RUSSELL M. ARUNDEL ELIZABETH IRELAND POE

We are sad to record the loss in 1978 of two major supporters of the National Sporting Library. Russell M. Arundel of Warrenton, Virginia, a Director of the Library, not only supplied his wise counsel, but also donated a major portion of the Huth Lonsdale Collection.

Elizabeth Ireland Poe (Mrs. Parker Poe) of Thomasville, Georgia contributed largely to the Library's indexing of early sporting magazines and also made many gifts from her own collection of books and paintings including a portrait by Troye. We are, however, glad to welcome Arthur W. Arundel who has assumed his father's place on the Board of Directors.

RESEARCHERS IN THE NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

The number of researchers using the National Sporting Library continued to increase during the past six months. They included a documentary film producer, a Hollywood movie script writer and several other writers doing work in the field of foxhunting. Veterinary students, magazine reporters, college students, librarians, horse breeders, authors and artists have used the library recently to research topics in the fields of veterinary medicine, coaching and driving, Thoroughbred racing, horse training, early American periodicals, history of racing in Virginia, and early horse sports in the west.

DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

Since the publication of our last Newsletter, gifts of books and other materials have been received from William W. Brainard, Jr., *The Chronicle of the Horse*, Peter Devers, John G. Fritz, Alexander Mackay-Smith, *The Masters of Foxhound Association of America*, Mrs. Parker Poe, Mrs. Esther L. Vorhees, Lowry Watkins, and Mrs. Bryce Wing.

Of special interest are two 1786 aquatints by Francis Jukes after William Mason showing a country racecourse, a gift from Mrs. Parker Poe; a rare volume of de Solleysell's *Complete Horseman*, C. W. Anderson portfolios and books on the Arabian horse in America included in Mrs. Esther Vorhees extensive collection; and S. Bryce Wing's British and American foxhunting books, as well as photograph albums showing the former MFH in his many activities connected with the Elkridge-Harford, Meadow Brook and Millbrook Hunts, given by Mrs. Wing.

EVOLUTION (Cont.)

book advocates sitting back over fences more than had become fashionable by that time.

Twentieth Century side-saddle literature may roughly be divided into the first quarter century, and the "modern" era from the '30's to the present. A work of major interest is Alice Hayes' *The Horsewoman*, published in London in 1903, and incorporating some excellent photographs. She begins with the premise that the side-saddle is "as artificial a production as a musical instrument, and a full knowledge of its peculiarities often cannot be acquired during a lifetime. Here the great difference between men and women is that the former ride the horse; the latter, the saddle. This tyranny of the side-saddle would not be so marked if this article of gear were of a uniform pattern of the best possible kind...A beginner who is put on a properly made saddle...will make more progress in a month than she would otherwise in, say, five years."

Characteristic of her unique style, Mrs. Hayes defends her preference for a dip-seated saddle with the observation that "the level seat fad which some fashionable saddlers try to impress...is an absurdity from a hunting point of view, because no one out of an insane asylum would care to sit for several hours in a perfectly level surface, whether it was a saddle or a chair." She also decries the "square seat" school which called for the right thigh to be parallel to the horse's backbone, pointing out the propensity of this position to put too much weight on the left, usually resulting in a sore back for the horse. Of further note, there are some eye-opening photos of a New Zealand lady jumping a seven-strand wire fence, and a zebra being ridden side-saddle, and a chapter on walking foxhound puppies.

An American work of the period, *Riding and Driving for Women* (1912) by Belle Beach, has rightly become a classic. This work, too, makes excellent use of photographs and manages to revive some controversial points: "With regard to holding the reins in both hands, this should only be done by beginners, and in the hunting field, and with absolutely green horses." How far the daring Amazone may aspire is indeed encouraging:

With regard to playing polo, many women have the idea they can only play polo in a man's saddle. My opinion, based on my own experience and the experience of many of my friends, is directly to the contrary. Many women play polo, and play it very well, in a side-saddle, and I do not know any reason why a woman cannot play at least as well riding in a side-saddle as riding astride. She certainly has a more secure seat in the side-saddle, and the first awkwardness of the back-hand stroke in this position being overcome...it is so much easier to ride another player off when one



A colored lithograph of Lexington as a five-year-old (after a drawing made the previous year by Louis Maurer) published by Nathaniel Currier, lithographer, of New York City. A demand for pictures of Lexington was created when he lowered Lecompte's previous world's record for four miles of 7:26 to 7:19¾ at the Metairie Course, New Orleans, on April 2, 1855. Lexington also beat Lecompte at the same course two weeks later (time: 7:23¾) and was then retired to stud.

following advertisement appeared in the sporting weekly *The Spirit of the Times*,

LEXINGTON A FINE COLORED PRINT OF LEXINGTON

From the painting of TROYE

Engraved in England. A few of these highly finished pictures may be obtained at this office, price \$5.00 each. Only one hundred have ever been struck off.

The advertisement was repeated in the issue of February 21 and again in the issue of May 9. As previously recorded in this Newsletter, a fine impression of this very rare print, reproduced herewith, is in the possession of the National Sporting Library, the gift of Harry T. Peters, Jr. of Orange, Va.

Troye's June 1855 painting shows Lexington in racing condition with all the muscles that propelled him to a world's record in April. The eye of the horse hints at the impending blindness which was already beginning at that time.

Lexington became the property of Robert Aitcheson Alexander in midsummer 1856. Alexander had gone to England in search of a stallion which proved fruitless. By chance he met Mr. Ten Broeck, Lexington's owner, in England and arranged to buy the horse for \$15,000. Alexander's Woodburn Farm was almost across the road from W. F. Harper's, so that he was easily transferred to the brick stall and surrounding paddock where he was to remain until his death on July 1, 1875. Troye painted Lexington many times thereafter at Woodburn, but in his form as a stallion, not as a racehorse.

The present whereabouts of the 1855 portrait is unknown to this writer. Perhaps it remained in England with the publisher, Mr. Lloyd. What a treasure-trove this would be if it could be discovered today!

is in the side-saddle that all the women on both teams should ride either in the side-saddle or in the man's saddle in order to make the game fairer.

Not surprisingly, the enterprising Ms. Beach echoes Nannie O'Donoghue when she states that "when a woman hunts she enters a masculine field of sport, and in the hunting-field she is meeting men on their own grounds and on even terms."

Ironically, a 1913 London publication, Mrs. Stuart Menzies' *Women in the Hunting Field*, again emphasizes the more genteel aspects—including tips on cutting the figure as a real fashion plate, and care of the complexion for the avid foxhunter. However, she does affirm that "nothing gives you confidence like a good-natured fall," and "it is pluck that gets you into the trouble, and nerve gets you out of it." Some of the more quaint and outmoded notions aside, Mrs. Menzies brings up one very modern point indeed: "We are not all rich—in fact, some of us are very much the reverse—but that is no reason why you should not hunt."

Swinging back the pendulum, however, in 1922 and 1926 in America came two works with chapters on the side-saddle, *Principles of Equitation and Advanced Equitation* by Baretto de Souza, an exponent of the Portuguese classical school who emphasizes manege techniques, even going so far as to suggest that the lady "must consequently not try to lift the left knee under the so-called 'leaping head,' which ought to be abolished because of its utter uselessness"! To be fair to de Souza, who expounds some excellent principles, he makes this revolutionary statement in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of the right leg grip, and later says that specific care should be executed in teaching the lady on the left rein. As long as the horse goes truly forward, he concludes, "a lady riding side-saddle can obtain from her mount practically anything that a stride-rider can." There are some nice jumping photos to prove it, and the diagrams of methods of holding the reins are especially helpful.

The last important period of side-saddle literature deals with three modern texts, although these are far from all-inclusive. Some excellent chapters on side-saddle are to be found in various uncited works, and such reputed authors as Lida Fleitmann Bloodgood (cited earlier for her excellent history, *The Saddle Of Queens*), wrote profusely and well on the subject. Coincidentally, all three of the remaining texts are British.

To Whom the Goddess, by Lady Diana Shedden and Lady Apsley, and illustrated by the latter in addition to many lovely photographs, is truly a turning point in side-saddle literature. A review in *Horse and Hound*—"Stands out as one of the most important books in the subject which have ever been published"—is no exaggeration. The book is so thorough, and so contemporary in tone, that it is still an excellent reference in toto. With its emphasis on moderation (the authors prefer a "med-

ium seat" on a saddle), blood horses, and good psychology (rather than some of the earlier sentimentality, particularly by women writers) in handling horses, it is no-nonsense all the way, with a complementary dry humor to go along: "Horses are like husbands: they are the strong silent ones and dearly love to think they have their own way."

The authors give a brief history on hunting, followed by practical advice on training a young horse, actual hunting (including a good series of photos on how to open a gate), riding in hunter trials, and even point-to-pointing, with a photo of a winning Irish Amazone.

Gone are the makers of the haute école. The Duke of Newcastle's *Treatise on Horsemanship*...would be useless in the making of a young horse for modern conditions, yet all the old schools have a deal to teach us that is intensely interesting to a keen student of horsemanship.

Acknowledging the wisdom of this advice, we come now to the standard text of many years, Doreen Archer-Houblon's *Side-Saddle* (1938). Although a bit difficult to follow in places, this is the ultimate technical manual for the Amazone. Photo sequences at various gaits (there is a particularly informative series on the gallop and flying changes) and over fences illustrate the text. The description of proper posting is good, and while the photos shown on attempting a half pass to the left are far from perfect, there is a definite emphasis on riding with impulsion into the bit. On jumping, "much controversy rages among experts on the ideal way to sit over a fence," explains the author succinctly. She then goes on to

detail the mechanics of the "forward swing" in vogue today. In an age when the side-saddle was already on the way out, Ms. Houblon offers the following incisive passage:

Strangely enough, it is this very firmness of seat which has brought the side-saddle into such disrepute. Some women, after a few rides, feel so secure that they do not realise that there is anything more to learn. The side-saddle has, for years and years, taken the blame for many things which were not its fault, though maybe they were not always the fault of the rider either, but of an incompetent saddler.

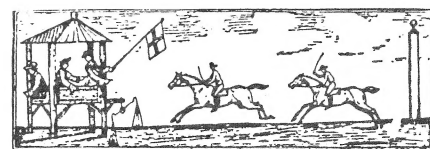
Finally, in 1978, we have come full circle with the publication of *Riding Side-Saddle*, co-authored by the founders of Britain's Ladies Side-Saddle Association, Janet Macdonald and Valerie Francis. It is a complete, well-researched work, and certainly the most clear and concise available as an equitation manual for the aspiring Amazone. Examining the pertinent developments of the modern side-saddle, and some variations, the authors go more deeply into mechanics such as stirrup fittings and proper stuffing than any previous writers—a fact which is to be immensely appreciated today, when making (or in some cases, even re-stuffing) a side-saddle correctly is almost a lost art. Acknowledging the traditions of the manege which have so influenced the side-saddle art, the authors devote an excellent chapter to modern dressage riding aside, as well as providing workable techniques over fences and in emergencies. The many drawings are not only delightful, but explicitly descriptive of the instructional parts of the text, and there is an exhaustive section on showing, including proper turnout, not only in the British Isles, but on North American and elsewhere. Of special import is the comparatively recent adaptation describing riding (which quite often means riding side-saddle) as a therapeutic exercise for the handicapped.

Far from being "as much an anachronism as the cabriolet, the crinoline, and the minuet," Lida Fleitmann Bloodgood's 1959 lament that "the saddle which carried us to victory in the show-ring and to glory in the hunting-field has had its day," the lore of the Amazone is very much alive and advancing equestrian discipline today.

* * *



Janet Macdonald, co-founder of the Ladies Side-Saddle Association and co-author, with Valerie Francis, of this year's new hardcover, "*Riding Side-Saddle*".



LIBRARY STAFF CHANGES

Nancy Cole resigned as librarian in October, although she will continue to work part-time as her schedule permits. The new librarian is June Ruhsam, who has been the librarian at Highland School in Warrenton the past eight years. Mrs. Ruhsam's professional experience includes radio, journalism and teaching. She raises purebred Angus cattle and Thoroughbred horses and is an avid foxhunter.

New assistant librarian is Judith Ozment, who was formerly a school secretary in New Jersey before moving to Virginia where she was librarian at Middleburg elementary school for eight years. She is active in Loudoun Riding for the Handicapped and also its 4-H club. Her family breeds and trains registered Appaloosas.

NEW DIRECTOR FOR N.S.L.

Arthur W. Arundel was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the National Sporting Library, taking the place of his late father, Russel M. Arundel, ex-M.F.H. Mr. Arundel, known as "Nick" to his friends, publishes four Virginia weekly newspapers, and is - as are most of the Board members - a foxhunter. His wife and four of five children also enjoy the sport, the children being pony clubbers as well. The fifth, six-year-old Tom, will soon be joining the others.

In addition to foxhunting, Mr. Arundel's sporting interests include steeplechasing - point-to-point in particular. He has been president of the Seven Corners committee (Virginia's owner-rider timber series) for 15 years. He is also president of the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, based in Nairobi, Kenya. And, at his farm near The Plains, Virginia, is the Merry Oak Wildlife Sanctuary.

FRIENDS OF THE N.S.L.

Since the publication of our last members list in the June, 1978 Newsletter, the following individuals have become Friends of the National Sporting Library: Bud and Isabelle Brown, Scottsdale, Az. Mrs. Charles Cooke, Middleburg, Va. Mrs. Esther Vorhees, Cleveland, Ohio Mrs. S. Bryce Wing, Glyndon, Md.



Miss Lucy Glitters, notorious fictional Amazone, in a lithograph from R.S. Surtees' *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour*, 1853.

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